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XXI.—THE SCANSION OF PROSE RHYTHM.

Listening to an orator delivering a speech or to a reader reciting good prose, we may notice, running through the speaker's utterances, a characteristic and persistent tune. The voice rises and falls, increases and diminishes, moves now slowly, now rapidly, throws emphasis upon one phrase and takes it away from another, not waywardly and erratically but in accordance with some underlying pattern or scheme of movement. It is this tune or pattern, in some of its simpler and more obvious features, that I mean to consider in this paper. The pattern is the rhythm of prose, and to chart it and discover its law is to effect for prose what metrical scansion does for verse.

The tune of prose, I need hardly say, is highly complex and elusive. To attempt to analyze it is to court disaster. So many writers, indeed, have called the task impossible that anyone who now ventures to take it up owes to his fellow investigators either an apology or a justification. I shall attempt the latter.

What is, I suppose, the prevailing opinion about the tune of prose, is well expressed in the following passage from a recent review: "The proper beauty and essence of prose rhythm in all the great stylists is its freedom, its variety, its complexity, its avoidance of the strict forms of metre and repetition of metre; its effects, in short, are secured by a violation of metrical regularity, by an elaborate combination of movement and of numbers which evade scientific analysis." (*Nation*, vol. LXXIV, p. 211.) This but echoes the dictum of a distinguished writer: "Each phrase of each sentence," says Robert Louis Stevenson in his essay *On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature*,

"like an air or a recitative in music, should be so artfully compounded out of long and short, out of accented and unaccented, as to gratify the sensual ear. And of this the ear is the sole judge. It is impossible to lay down laws. Even in our accentual and rythmic language no analysis can find the secret of the beauty of a verse ; how much less then of those phrases, such as prose is built of, which obey no law but to be lawless and yet to please."

To obscurantist opinions and arguments such as these we may reply as follows: No matter how free or how seemingly irregular the rhythm of good prose may be, one fact remains,—it was produced by literary artists. Had prose literature been written by the winds or the wild sea waves, there might still be a chance of discovering the law of its rhythm, for even natural phenomena have a certain periodicity. But since it was produced not by wayward natural forces but by human beings with a fine sense for symmetry and order, the case is much more hopeful. We may reason thus: Whatever proceeds from the mind of an artist, at least in his happier moods, may be presumed to be written *secundum artem*. If there is art in it there is in it also a principle of order. This principle of order the inquirer may hope eventually to come at, no matter how cunningly it may have been concealed. The search for the principle may be long and laborious, it may in particular cases be barren of results ; but it is not in the nature of things useless or foredoomed to failure.

In any attempt to discover the regulative principle of prose rhythm, it is necessary first to distinguish sharply between prose and poetry. As I have elsewhere tried to demonstrate, these two great literary types, as regards both their origin and their character, are essentially disparate.¹ With respect to their origin we may note that they have arisen from markedly different situations in primitive society.

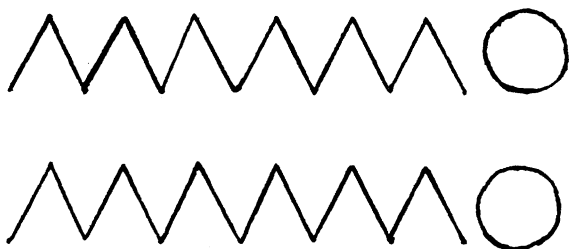
¹ *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XIX, 2.

Prose has sprung, I hold, from a situation in which primitive man used speech mainly for communication—a situation, that is, in which his chief interest in his words was in their effect upon his fellow-men. Prose is thus the lineal descendant of conversation, signals, warning cries, calls for help, and summonings to the feast or the fray. If prose was originally conveyance, poetry, on the other hand, has sprung from a state of things in which speech was used mainly for expression, that is, just to give vent to powerful feelings. Poetry, therefore, has its origin in communal dance and song, and perhaps also in the cries accompanying concerted labor. To quote my own formula, prose is expression for communication's sake, poetry is communication for expression's sake.

Out of these two distinct situations—the expressive and the communicative situation, if I may call them so—and out of the mental attitudes which naturally result from them, have arisen two distinct types of rhythm.

I will consider first, briefly, the rhythm of expression. This, as I have said, is associated in its origin mainly with the communal dance, where it is exhibited both in words and in bodily movements. Its characteristic form can perhaps best be noted in the stamping of feet, clapping of hands, nodding of the head, swaying of the body, etc., which accompany all modes of primitive dance and song. The dances of the Philippine natives at the St. Louis Exposition displayed this kind of rhythm reduced to its lowest terms. In the Igorrote village I observed a dance in which eight or ten savages took part. For music one of them beat a gong, others clicked and jangled pieces of metal together, and all chanted in unison a monotonous, wailing song; while a drummer, who sat apart from the dancers, beat continuously with his fingers upon a long horn-shaped drum. To these discordant sounds the dancers moved slowly in a circle, each

one revolving at the same time upon his own axis. As the natives went round they lifted and dropped their feet in a kind of solemn trot in exact time to the music. The man with the gong, as often as he came opposite the drummer, lifted his instrument on high and struck it a resounding blow. He then subsided into the measure of the jog-trot. Such was the dance. Represented diagrammatically the progress of the dancers and the pattern of the rhythm might take a form such as this :



the up-and-down lines representing the movements of the dancers' feet, the circle representing the stroke of the gong which marked the completion of the round. If the reader have a lively imagination he may see in these movements some resemblance to waves of light or of sound.

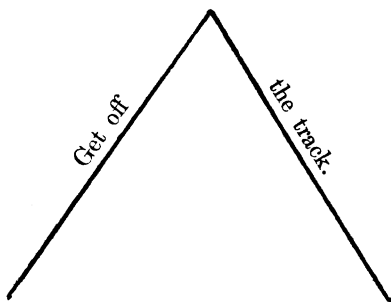
Assuming that the illustration is typical, we may infer that what constitutes the characteristic pattern of the expressional rhythm is the recurrence of brief units of sound or motion at regular intervals, the recurring units being so grouped as to show within small compass a measured progression. I will apply to this peculiar movement the term *nutation*—that is, a nodding.¹

¹ The word was suggested to me, not by Horace's *bonus dormitat Homerus*, but by the lines in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* :

"Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy."

Although the term is not as felicitous as I could wish, it will at any rate suggest the distinctive pattern of the rhythm.

If now we turn to the rhythm of communication we shall find a very different state of affairs. The exact nature of the difference will appear if we contrast two familiar experiences: one expressive, the other communicative. All know from recollections of childhood what it is to dance for joy, and some, in such moments of ecstasy, have, perhaps, fallen into poetry. These are the proper rhythms of expression. But now set in contrast to these the actions and speech appropriate to communication. Let the reader imagine a situation where the need of communication is urgent. A friend, let us say, is standing on the railroad track in front of a swiftly approaching train. In such an emergency one would not motion in the measured time of an orchestra conductor waving his baton, nor speak in iambic pentameter. Communicative utterance would trace a different pattern. The arms of the observer would impulsively shoot up in the air and come down again. The voice would perform a similar evolution. If one shouted, for example, "Get off the track," the voice would rise in pitch in a crescendo glide through the words "Get off," then descend in the words "the track." Such a movement might be represented graphically as follows:



Other examples of the communicative pattern may be found in the traditional calls to animals. The call "Co-o-o-

boss!" to cows and "Whoo-ee!" to pigs show the ascending and descending glide. Recently I heard under the window of my office a small boy trying to hold communication with his dog. The call was "Here, Vic! Here, Vic!" with a long upward glide on "Here," and an abrupt downward glide on "Vic!"

These few examples will perhaps illustrate sufficiently the main characteristics of the communicative rhythm. It is a rushing, surging, gliding movement, which starting at some minimum of force, rapidity, pitch, or suspense, rises to a climax in one or all of these particulars and then falls away again. I shall apply to this type of rhythm the term *motation*.

If the nutative pattern is compared to the undulations of sound-waves, the motative pattern may suggest a variety of analogues, none of them, I fear, very satisfactory. It may be compared to an ocean wave breaking upon the beach, running high up on the sand, and then sucking back again. Or it may be likened to the sound of rain on the roof made by the passing of a thunder shower,—first a few big drops, then more of them, then a rapid downfall, then the same phenomena in reverse order. Or a sudden gust of wind may give the same effect. The dead ivy leaves tap on the window-pane first timidly, then hurriedly, then in a desperate fright, then in degrees of diminishing excitement. The passing of a charge of cavalry might affect the ear in the same way.

Regarding the origin of this curious movement I am not prepared to speak with positiveness, but it may be explained physiologically by the fact that every innervation begins with a minimum of force, increases slowly or rapidly to a maximum, and then diminishes to the end as the nervous supply is exhausted.¹

¹ Good illustrations are the long whistle of surprise and spontaneous cheering at foot-ball games. The researches of Martens (*Über das Verhalten*

The two fundamental rhythms have now been described. It is upon them as upon a frame-work or skeleton that the elaborate structures of our modern prose and poetry have been erected. Poetry is mainly the elaboration of a simple nutative pattern. Prose is mainly the elaboration of a simple motative pattern.

von Vokalen und Diphthongen in gesprochenen Worten, *Zeitschrift f. Biologie*, vol. xxv, p. 295) and others show that isolated words and vowels are frequently pronounced in this way, that is, with circumflex glide. But all of the characteristics of the phenomenon cannot be accounted for by this hypothesis. As I suggested in a preceding paper, it seems likely that the speaker's expectation of a reply, and the hearer's response, have played some part in the shaping of the rhythm. If we might conceive of the earliest form of speech, or the precursor of speech, as a long ululation naturally rising in pitch and force with the rising emotion of the speaker (or ululator),—a view for which, in my opinion, much is to be said,—the earliest articulation of such an undifferentiated stream of utterance might well be caused by the response of a fellow-being. The response would check the ululation and make a significant break in it. After the break the cry would be expressive of a different mood, and with the relaxation of tension would naturally descend in pitch or force to the close.

The upward movement, if this hypothesis have any warrant, would then be connected with a state of tension, expectation and suspense, the downward movement with relaxation, discharge of nervous tension, completion of the impulse which led to the call, and so forth.

I am confirmed in this hypothesis by some phenomena of modern speech. Consider, for example, the case of a nurse calling to a child. The nurse lifts her voice in a shrill crescendo that mounts steadily in pitch through perhaps an octave. If now she suddenly discovers that the child is at her elbow, she breaks off abruptly and in some phrase such as "Oh, there you are," descends to the tonic note.

Illiterate conversation is usually of this type. The speaker begins the sentence excitedly, his voice mounting in pitch and increasing in rapidity with his eagerness to convey his idea. But midway in his progress if he sees that his hearers know what he is driving at and guess what is coming next, his speech trails away into an incoherent muttering. Very likely he closes the sentence with such a phrase as "You know what I mean," glad to escape the labor of rounding his period.

A similar phenomenon, as Mr. E. E. Hale has noted in his *My Double and How He Undid Me*, may be observed in the conversation of cultivated persons at a crowded reception.

We have next to consider the scansion of the motative type.

The question naturally arises at this point, What is meant by scansion? As it is used with reference to verse (and I am not aware that anyone hitherto has applied it seriously to prose), we may distinguish between a larger and a more restricted sense of the term. In its broadest sense it may be applied to any scheme of graphic outlines, symbols, etc., intended to exhibit the phenomena of metre.¹ But I shall not use the term in this broad sense. My present interest is in the special form known as 'routine scansion.' In this kind of scansion the sense of the line is disregarded. The words are so read as to exaggerate the difference between the strong and the weak stresses, and the syllables are separated in a seemingly unnatural manner in order to make quite obvious the divisions of the feet.

Opinions differ regarding the value and normality of this kind of scansion. Sievers speaks of it as a hybrid thing; Meumann, as something "counter to the nature of poetic material." Mr. Liddell (*An Introduction to the Study of Poetry*, p. 176) printing a line from one of Shakespeare's sonnets as it would be read in routine scansion, says that "no one would naturally utter these English words with the emphasis we have indicated." "We have been accustomed," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "to describe the heroic line as five iambic feet, and to be filled with pain and confusion, whenever, as by the conscientious school-boy, we have heard our own description put in practice.

"All night' | the dread' | less an' | gel un' | pursued'

goes the school-boy; but though we close our ears, we cling to our definition, in spite of its proved and naked insuffi-

¹ Some highly elaborate systems of symbolism, such as that of A. J. Ellis, have been devised for this purpose.

ciency.”¹ According to A. J. Ellis (*English Pronunciation*²), “the routine scansion with the accent on alternate syllables is known only to grammarians, having never been practiced by poets.” On the other hand, Mr. J. B. Mayor in his *Chapters on English Metre*, p. 6, spiritedly defends the practice, both on educational and on scientific grounds. “What I would affirm,” he says, “is that it is impossible for the routine scansion to die out as long as there are children and common people, and poetry which commends itself to them. And I would also venture to say that it *ought* not to die out as long as there are scientific men who will endeavor to bring clearness and precision into our notions about poetry as about other things. Routine scansion is the natural form of poetry to a child, as natural to it as the love of sweet things or bright colors: it is only through the routine scansion that its ear can be educated to appreciate in time a more varied and complex rhythm. No one who knows children can doubt this. If example is wanted, it may be found in Ruskin’s *Praeterita*, p. 55, where the author speaks of a prolonged struggle between his childish self and his mother ‘concerning the accent of the *of* in the lines :

“Shall any following spring revive
The ashes of the urn?”

I insisting partly in childish obstinacy, and partly in true instinct for rhythm (being wholly careless on the subject both of urns and their contents) on reciting it with an accented *of*. It was not till after three weeks’ labor that my mother got the accent lightened on the *of* and laid on the *ashes*, to her mind.’ But any parent may test it for himself in children who have a taste for poetry.³ Whatever effort

¹ *On Style in Literature, Contemporary Review*, vol. 47, p. 554.

² Part III, p. 929.

³ The test may profitably be applied also to adults, some of the most eminent poets being like children in this respect, as the following passages

may be made to teach them to observe the true verbal accents and the stops, and attend to the meaning and logic of the line, they will insist on singing it to a chant of their own, disregarding everything but the metrical accent, and are made quite unhappy if compelled to say or read it like prose. And, after all, is this not the right sense of the *μηδὲν ἀείδε*, and 'arma cano'? is it not the fact that the earliest recitation of poetry was really what we should consider a childish sing-song? This becomes still more probable when we remember that music and dancing were frequent accompaniments of the earliest kinds of poetry, the effect of which would undoubtedly be to emphasize and regulate the beats or accents of the line; just as in church-singing now the verbal accent is ignored, if it is opposed to the general rhythmical character of the verse."¹

Reserving opinion regarding the educational value of routine scansion, I find this argument entirely to my liking, especially that part of it in which Professor Mayor suggests that the pleasure which children feel is due to the revival of the simple rhythms of the dance and song. This I take to be the true explanation both of the method of reading and of the accompanying motions. In routine scansion we

will show: "He [Mr. C. K. Paul] confirmed on Tennyson's own authority, the well-known story of his having, on that celebrated voyage to Copenhagen with Sir Donald Currie, unconsciously beat time to one of his own poems, which he was mouthing forth, upon the shoulder of the Empress of all the Russias!" (Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, *Notes from a Diary*.) "While Poe was in Richmond some of his friends got up a reading for his benefit, and I heard him read the 'Raven' and some other poems before a small audience in one of the parlors of the Exchange Hotel. In spite of my admiration of Poe I was not an uncritical listener, and I have retained the impression that he did not read very well. His voice was pleasant enough, but he emphasized the rhythm unduly—a failing common, I believe, to poets endowed with a keen sense of the music of their own verse." (B. L. Gildersleeve, in J. A. Harrison's *A Group of Poets and their Haunts*.)

¹ Cf. on this subject the article *A Phonetic Theory of English Prosody* by Jas. Lecky, in *Proceedings of the English Philological Society*, Dec. 19, 1884.

turn savages for the time being. As we chant the verses and feel the old crude rhythms surge through us, we nod the head, tap the foot, and beat time with the hand quite in the fashion of our primitive ancestors.

If then the routine scansion of verse reveals the nutative pattern, that is, the characteristic beat of the syllables of the foot and the grouping of the feet in the line, the routine scansion of prose should in like manner reveal a pattern of motation. The task of identifying the motative rhythm is made difficult, however, by the fact that motation works with somewhat different elements. In verse, at least in Germanic verse, the principal element of the metre is stress or energy. The other elements—pause, pitch, quality, number, quantity, and rate of movement—are subsidiary. But in the shaping of the motative rhythm the most important element of speech appears to be not stress but pitch.¹ Next in the order of their importance come pause, rate of movement, stress, quality, number, and quantity.

That stress is fundamental for verse rhythm and pitch for prose rhythm may be shown by a simple experiment. Read a specimen of verse by means of the vowels only, observing the stress and the pauses, but eliminating all of the other elements. Listening to such a recital one will have no hesitation in deciding that the original was in metre. And

¹ A different opinion is implied in the italicised words of the following (from A. J. Ellis's article *Accent and Emphasis* in *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1873-74, p. 132): "'Even speaking,' which is cultivated by modern actors, consists in delivering verse without any variety of pitch due to its construction. *This is reducing the intonation of verse to the intonation of prose*, and leaving the distinction solely to their individual fixed and free periodicities of force." But to my ear 'even speaking' damages prose far more than it damages poetry. Examples of prose pronounced without change of pitch may be found in calls for trains in large railway stations, in the rapid reading of proof to a copy-holder in newspaper offices, and in the cicada-like drone of legislative reading-clerks.

if the listener is at a little distance he will say that you are reciting poetry in a mumbling sing-song. Now read a piece of prose in the same way. The rhythm will elude the most careful ear. The sounds may be compared to the clicking of a telegraph instrument in the ear of one who does not understand the Morse alphabet. But read the same passage with attention to the natural rise and fall of pitch, and the rhythm of prose is at once suggested.

Although such crude tests are inconclusive, it may fairly be inferred that the prose foot or organic unit of prose rhythm consists of an upward followed by a downward glide.¹ To this movement I shall give the name of *motative*

¹ This conception is not new, as the following passages will show ; but it has been applied heretofore, I believe, almost exclusively to the periodic sentence.

"As a wild beast gathers itself together for the attack, so should discourse gather itself together as in a coil in order to increase its vigor." (Demetrius, *On Style*, § 8. Trans. by Rhys Roberts.)

"Ogni Clausula come ha principio casi ha mezzo e fine : nel principio si va movendo, e ascende : nel mezzo quasi stanca dalla fatica, stando in pie si pasa alquanto ; pai discende, e vola al fine per acquetarsi."—Speroni, *Dialogo della Rhetorica* (Aldus, 1643), fol. 149.

"One rise in every sentence, one gentle descent, that is the law for French composition.—Whereas now amongst us English, not only is the too general tendency of our sentences toward hyperbolical length, but it will be found continually that, instead of one rise and one corresponding fall—one *arsis* and one *thesis*—there are many. Flux and reflux, swell and cadence, that is the movement for a sentence ; but our modern sentences agitate us by rolling fires after the fashion of those internal earthquakes that, not content with one throe, run along spasmodically in a long succession of intermitting convulsions." (DeQuincey, *Essay on Style*, paragraph 22.)

"To this period of individualism an end was put by Dryden, whose example in codifying and reforming was followed for nearly a century. During this period . . . a general principle was established that the cadence as well as the sense of a sentence should rise gradually toward the middle, should if necessary continue then on a level for a brief period, and should then descend in a gradation corresponding to its accent." (Saintsbury, *Specimens of English Prose Style*, p. xxxvi.)

"The true business of the literary artist is to plait or weave his mean-

arc. It will be assumed as a working hypothesis that all prose is made up of such arcs arranged in sequence, and that the tune of prose is determined by their character and inter-relation in somewhat the same way that a verse is determined by the character and inter-relation of metrical feet.

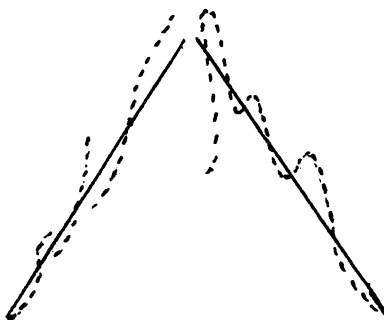
It will be understood, of course, that the motative arc does not represent the true voice-movements of appreciative reading. Far from it. In actual speech nearly every syllable has a quite peculiar modulation, and the number of glides is almost infinite.¹ But just as the routine scansion of verse, by disregarding the fine shades of the emotional reading, reduces poetry to a simple, monotonous pattern of strong and weak stresses, so a routine scansion of prose reduces the successive sentences of a prose composition to a crude diagram of rising and falling glides. It drops the minor deviations out of sight in order to chart the general trend.² This relation of actual speech movements to routine

ing, involving it around itself; so that each sentence, by successive phrases, shall first come into a kind of knot, and then after a moment of suspended meaning, solve and clear itself." (Stevenson, *On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature. Works*, vol. xxii, p. 247.) The similarity of Stevenson's conception to that of Demetrius is worthy of notice.

¹To construct a simple apparatus for tracing speech-glides, stretch a violin-string over a strip of board about twenty inches long, supporting the string at each end by means of triangular bridges about one-fourth inch high. Tune the string to E and mark on the board under it the intervals of the musical scale in tones, half-tones, and quarter-tones. With such an instrument, by sliding the left forefinger up and down the string, plucking the latter meanwhile with the right, one may follow quite accurately the most intricate movements of the voice, provided, of course, that one possesses a sensitive ear. The movements of the left hand may be recorded by any one of several devices used for this purpose in psychological laboratories.

²There are writings, both in verse and in prose, which lend themselves so readily to routine scansion that they can hardly be read naturally in any other way. In verse *Mother Goose*, Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, and the *New England Primer*, in prose the works of Gibbon and Samuel Johnson, furnish abundant examples. Of Johnson's *Rambler*, Hazlitt (*On the Prose Style of Poets*) writes as follows:

scansion is shown in the figure below, the dotted line representing the voice, the black lines the scansion.



Read in this way prose bears some resemblance to the ranting speech of a Fourth of July orator.

Assuming, then, that the motative arc is a diagrammatic representation of a typical upward and downward movement of the voice that occurs in all prose speech, we may next proceed to inquire into its kinds and to exhibit some of its sequences.

Two principal types of arc may be distinguished, one differing from the other mainly in the location of the pause.

To the first type I shall apply the term *suspensive*. In the suspensive type the voice, beginning on the natural keynote, rises in a glide or series of glides to a certain maximum. Here a pause occurs to which we may give the name *medial pause*. The voice then begins again at the altitude where it left off or slightly below (sometimes,

"There is a tune in it, a mechanical recurrence of the same rise and fall in the clauses of his sentences, independent of any reference to the meaning of the text, or progress or inflection of the sense. There is the alternate roll of his cumbrous cargo of words: his periods complete their revolutions at certain stated intervals, let the matter be longer or shorter, rough or smooth, round or square, different or the same."

though rarely, above), and descends in a glide or series of glides to the tonic. Usually the upward glide is marked by a crescendo of force and an increasing rate of movement, the downward glide by a decrescendo and decreasing rate of movement; but these accompaniments are subject to variation. I give a few simple examples, indicating the medial pause by a vertical line :

When he narrated | the scene was before you.—(R. L. Stevenson, *Pastoral*, p. 97.)

The consequences of this battle | were just of the same importance as the revolution itself.—(Webster, *Second Bunker Hill Oration*.)

The intercourse of society,—its trade, its religion, its friendships, its quarrels, | is one wide, judicial investigation of character.—(Emerson, *Over-Soul*.)

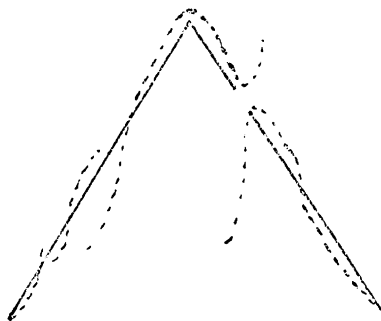
To take Macaulay out of literature and society and put him in the House of Commons | is like taking the chief physician out of London during a pestilence.—(Sydney Smith, *Memoir*, 1 : 265.)

In the second type of arc there is no pause at the point of maximum pitch. The voice glides up to the apex, then, without a break, glides down again for a certain distance. The medial pause comes in the descending segment of the arc, occurring normally at an interval of a fourth (or a minor fourth) below the maximum. Since the effect of this interval is to give to the cadence a plaintive quality, I have chosen for the second type of arc the name *pathetic*.¹ The

¹ This type seems to be hinted at in the following passages from Dionysius, *De Compositione Verborum*: "In Thucydides there is a passage in the speech delivered in the public assembly of the Plataeans which has a graceful arrangement and is full of pathos. It runs *ὑμεῖς τε, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, ἡ μόνη ἐλπὶς, δέδιμεν μὴ οὐ βέβαιοι ᾗτε*. But change the arrangement and dispose the clauses in this manner: *ὑμεῖς τε, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, δέδιμεν μὴ οὐ βέβαιοι ᾗτε ἡ μόνη ἐλπὶς*. Do the same grace and the same pathos still remain, when the clauses are arranged in this way? No one would assert it."

following sentence will illustrate it; the caret being used to indicate the highest point of the arc:

"His passions on the contrary, were violent even to_^ slaying | against all who leaned to whiggish principles."—(Macaulay, *Samuel Johnson*.) The arc corresponding to this sentence may be represented diagrammatically thus:



The first segment of the arc moves upward with steadily increasing intensity and rapidity through the phrase "even to;" after which, in the word "slaying" it descends with diminishing rapidity through an interval of a fourth. Then, after a pause of appreciable length, the sentence descends with diminishing speed to the close.

Other examples are as follows:

It was a treacherous_^ interval | of real summer.

He expresses what all_^ feel | but all cannot say.—(Newman, *Lecture on Literature*.)

Its secret alchemy turns to potable_^ gold | the poisonous waters which flow from death through life.—(Shelley, *Defence of Poetry*.)

From these two primary types¹ by compounding them and by varying their constituent elements, may be produced,

¹A third type in which the medial pause is lacking altogether, should perhaps be added, but I am not sure that it may not resolve itself ultimately into one of the other types. If it exists, it occurs but rarely.

I think, all of the more frequent rhythms of English prose. I will consider first the compounds, and then a few of the varieties.

The first type of compound arc, and the most common, is that which begins with the pathetic form and closes with the suspensive. Gliding up to the apex, the voice drops through an interval of a fourth without pausing; but instead of descending further it rises again, pauses at the maximum, and then descends to the tonic. Examples follow:

An infinite_^joy | is lost to the world | by the want of culture of this spiritual endowment.—(W. E. Channing.)

It is therefore a happy_^circumstance | for our frail species | that it is a crime which no man can possibly commit.—(Macaulay, *Disabilities of the Jews.*)

A second type of compound arc is formed by joining the pathetic to the suspensive type:

The office of Paymaster General during an expensive war was, in that age, | perhaps the most lucrative_^situation | in the gift of the government.—(Macaulay, *Earl of Chatham.*)

Here the voice rises to the apex at "age," pauses, descends through "perhaps the most," rises through "lucrative," descends a fourth through "situation," then pauses, and finally descends through the concluding phrase.

The double suspensive and the double pathetic types also occur.

Any one of these types is susceptible of many variations. The most important are as follows:

1. The length of the segments may be varied at pleasure.
2. The number of phrasal sections in either segment may vary.
3. Minor pauses may occur in either segment.
4. Correspondence of words, phrases, and pauses may give a special character to the arc.

By means of these and other more complex variations a large number of sub-types may be formed. These, however,

I shall not attempt to treat at this time. Instead I will pass to a brief consideration of certain rhythmical effects produced by sequences of the primary types.

I shall not pretend that I have detected all of the prevailing sequences. Indeed I have detected very few of them. The possible number of combinations is so great and writers of prose are so artful in their variations upon them, that the investigation must needs progress slowly. But I can point out some few sequences which occur over and over again in all writers, and which whenever they occur give to the prose a characteristic tune. I will chose for my illustrations very simple and obvious examples.

1. The suspensive type followed by the pathetic is one of the most common. Good illustrations are seen in the following passages :

"Trust | thyself. Every^heart | vibrates to that iron string."—(Emerson, *Self-Reliance*.)

"Though he slay me, | yet will I trust in him ; but I will maintain my own^ways | before him."—(*Job*, xiii, 15.)

An example of the same progression, but one in which the segments of the arcs are more extended, is the following from Bagehot's essay, *Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning* :

"And we must remember that the task which Shakespeare undertook | was the most difficult which any poet has ever attempted, and that it is a task in which after a million^efforts, | every other poet has failed.

Another illustration may be found in the last two sentences of the famous passage from Pitt's *Speech on the Excise Bill* :

"The poorest man may in his cottage | bid defiance to all the force of the crown. It may be frail ; its roof may shake ; the wind may blow through it ; the storm may enter,— | but the King of England cannot enter ; all his^forces | dare not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement :"

A long suspensive arc followed by a short pathetic arc is characteristic of Newman :

I do not claim for him, as such, any great depth of thought, or breadth of view, or philosophy, or sagacity, or knowledge of human nature, or experience of human life, though these additional gifts he may have, and the more he has of them the greater he is; | but I ascribe to him, as his characteristic gift, in a large sense the faculty of expression. He is master of the two-fold \wedge Logos, | the thought and the word, distinct, but inseparable from each other.—Newman, *Idea of a University*.

In the following from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Prince Otto*, the sequence is used to imitate the sound of the wind :

The sound of the wind in the forest swelled and sank, |
and drew near them with a running rush,
and died away \wedge and away | in the distance into fainting
whispers.

Somewhat less common is the sequence of pathetic and suspensive : ¹

He uttered a deep, voiceless, impassioned \wedge outcry | that
she might not die young nor he die young ;

that the struggles and hardships of life, now seeming to
be ended, | might never begirt him or her so closely again.—
(Allen, *Choir Invisible*, Chap. III.)

¹ Rhetoricians who delight in correcting the prose of distinguished writers, sometimes display a singular obtuseness to the music of the rhythm. The following is a case in point. The author of a book entitled *Errors in English Composition*, selects for correction the following passage from an article by Mr. John Morley in the *Fortnightly Review*. Rhythmically considered the passage consists of a suspensive arc followed by a pathetic :

"On the whole it may be said that the change from anonymous to signed articles | has followed the course of most changes. It has not led to one-half either of the evils \wedge or of the advantages | that its advocates and its opponents foretold." The author's quarrel is with the second sentence. On the ground that it is not sufficiently clear, he causes it to read as follows : "It has not led to one-half either of the evils foretold by its opponents | or of the advantages foretold by its advocates." But if he has made the sentence clearer he has at the same time destroyed the original rhythm. He has changed the arc from the pathetic type to the suspensive.

Addison readily_^undertook | the proposed task,
a task which to so good a Whig | was probably a pleasure.—
(Macaulay, *Addison*.)

Following are a few examples of more complex sequences. The first begins with the suspensive type, passes to the pathetic, then closes with a compound of pathetic and suspensive :

To take delight in that genius, so human, so kindly, so musical in expression | requires it may be said, no long preparation.

The art of Theocritus scarcely needs to be_^illustrated | by any description of the conditions among which it came to perfection.

It is always_^impossible | to analyze into its component parts | the genius of a poet.—(Lang, *Theocritus and His Age*, p. xiii.)

In the next example the suspensive type is followed by the pathetic-suspensive and this again by the pathetic.

Thus a Greek of the old school | must have despaired of Greek poetry.

There was_^nothing | (he would have said) | to evoke it ;
no dawn_^of liberty | could flush this silent Memnon into song.—(Andrew Lang, *Theocritus and His Age*.)

The following passage from *Jane Eyre* opens with the compound type ; the remaining arcs are alternately pathetic and suspensive.

A waft_^of wind | came sweeping down the laurel walk, |
and trembled through the boughs of the chestnut ;
it wandered away_^—away | —to an indefinite distance—it died.

The nightingale's voice was then the only_^voice | of the hour :

in listening to it | I again wept.—(*Jane Eyre*, Chap. 23.)

The next passage, from Landor, opens and closes with the pathetic type. The intervening arc is compound.

There are no fields_Λof amaranth | on this side of the grave ;
 there are no_Λvoices, | O Rhodope, | that are not soon mute,
 however tuneful ;

there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate
 love_Λrepeated, | of which the echo is not faint at last.

In the following paragraph the first two sentences are
 suspensive ; the third sentence is a pathetic arc of the same
 rhythm as the last one in the preceding selection ; the sequence
 closes with a brief suspensive arc. The second sentence
 appears to mount above the first because of the lengthening
 of the first segment of the arc.

Certainly at some hour, though not perhaps your hour, |
 the waiting waters will stir ;

in some shape though not perhaps the shape you dreamed,
 which your heart loved and for which it bled, | the healing
 herald will descend ;

the crippled and the blind and the dumb_Λand the possessed
 | will be led to bathe.

Herald, | come quickly.—(*Villette*, Chap. xvii.)

The following from Southey's *Life of Nelson* shows an
 alternation of compound and suspensive arcs :

The most trium_Λphant death | is that of the martyr ;
 the most awful | that of the martyred patriot ;
 the most_Λsplendid | that of the hero in the hour of victory ;
 and if the chariot and the horse of fire had been vouch-
 safed for Nelson's translation | he could scarcely have departed
 in a brighter blaze of glory.

Finally I give a specimen in which two compound arcs
 are followed by two suspensive arcs, the passage closing with
 the pathetic type :

There is another_Λisle | in my collection, | the memory of
 which besieges me.

I put a whole_Λfamily | there | in one of my tales ;

And later on, threw upon its shores and condemned to
 several days of rain and shellfish, | the hero of another.

The ink | is not yet faded ;
The sound of the sentences | is still in my mind's ear ;
And I am under a spell | to write of that island again.—
(R. L. Stevenson, *Memoirs of an Islet*.)

In bringing my paper to a close I will make two general observations :

First, it is apparent that my analysis of prose rhythm, even if it be correct, has hardly stormed of this philological Port Arthur the outermost fortress. Stress, alliteration, distribution of phrasal sections, balance of word and phrase, these and other elements have been touched upon briefly or not at all. But they have not been overlooked or underestimated. They have been put aside in order to direct attention sharply to a single feature—the prose foot or unit of scansion.

Second, I am well aware that objections may be made to my method of scanning—and made with some force—on the ground that it is purely subjective. If others do not scan these sentences as I have scanned them, what becomes of my theory? To this objection I can only reply that I have scanned according to my feeling and my instincts. A considerable number of other scholars will, I hope, have the same feeling and will scan in approximately the same way. If they do, then there is sense in my way of scanning. However individuals here and there may differ with me, my way has sanction; it cannot be wholly wrong. On the other hand if my scansion rings false to every one, then I shall be forced to concede either that I have not made myself clear, because of defects in the symbolism and mode of explanation, or (reluctantly) that my sense of rhythm is defective. In the latter case this paper will have, I hope, at least a transitory interest as a document in pathological psychology.

FRED NEWTON SCOTT.